



Research, Education, and Economics (REE)
National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board

Specialty Crop Committee (SCC) Meeting Notes – Thursday, November 10, 2022

SCC Members Present: Carlos Iglesias, Jim Tuinier, and Marguerite Green -- (3)

SCC Members Absent: Donnell Brown, and Gregory Goins (Chair) -- (4)

NAREEE and SCRI Board Staff Present: Kate Lewis, NAREEE Board Executive Director/Designated Federal Officer (DFO), Megan O'Reilly and Dr. Tom Bewick

Welcome, Roll Call, Approval of Oct 2022 meeting minutes

DFO Lewis did the roll call. She went on to welcome Tom Bewick from the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI). DFO Lewis let people know that she will record the question-and-answer session for SCRI's Dr. Jessica Shade to hear.

The meeting minutes were approved.

Member Q&A for SCRI Staff - 2022 Research Awards and Unobligated Program Budget and 2023 Program

DFO Lewis moved forward and opened the floor to the callers to kick off the discussion with Dr. Bewick

Dr. Carlos Iglesias asked how the non-utilized funds are managed. Dr. Bewick answered that all available funds for Fiscal Year (FY) 22 were used.

DFO Lewis noted that she had taken down some questions from the committee at the October meeting and one such question was "will matching funds be waived in FY 2023 programmatic cycle?" Mr. Bewick answered because the USDA's budget was operating under a continuing resolution and if Congress intends to pass a new budget it would let us know if the matching requirement could be waived by NIFA.

DFO Lewis went back to the October minutes again and referenced Donnell Brown's question "How successful are applicants getting a waiver for the matching requirements?" Mr. Bewick stated that the FY 22 applications had a statement that let the applicants know that the matching requirement waiver was automatic, so no one had to ask for it. If in FY 2023 if NIFA is not

authorized to waive a matching requirement by Congress that is final.

Dr. Marguerite Green asked where does the authority from the matching requirement come from? Dr. Bewick answered from Congress.

DFO Lewis went back again to the October minutes and asked “if and how the priority areas can be clarified and added? Dr. Bewick answered that the five legislative areas are said to be various stakeholders can give input to Congress (i.e., trade associations, industry processors and handlers) that are very engaged in the process.

Dr. Iglesias asked about improving nutritional quality as a priority. Dr. Bewick answered that the first area of improvement is genetic improvement, but there is a USDA-wide working group on the National nutritional quality of food and its an Administration priority.

Dr, Iglesias asked about reducing food waste as a priority. Dr. Bewick answered that one of the priorities addresses food efficiencies and reducing food waste is a major priority of the USDA.

DFO Lewis noted one final question regarding SCRI led listening sessions being held soon. Dr. Bewick stated that the SCRI doesn't have any near future for a listening session. NIFA has National listening sessions where the public can submit questions ahead of time, during the sessions, and there is an open comment period that ends at the end of November.

DFO Lewis asked if they will be doing training webinars for FY 23 for applicants. Dr. Bewick answered yes, SCRI has done training webinars for applicants on a regular basis.

DFO Lewis requested when the SCRI staff has a webinar schedule available for FY 23 please share it with her so that she can socialize it.

DFO Lewis had one last update stating that she has received a formal response of the NAREEE Approved Board recommendations, and they were transmitted to the SCRI staff in July. And then a formal acknowledgement came from the Acting Director of the Chief Scientist in September.

DFO Lewis continues to work with NIFA leadership to get a response to the recommendations which is a formal closing of the project by the next SCC meeting. DFO Lewis is trying to figure out what to do with the feedback for the Secretary.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 2:57 p.m..

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 8, 2022.